

REMARKS

Claims 1 - 20 were pending in the present application for patent as of the Office Action of June 7, 2004. In the Office Action of June 7, 2004, the Examiner rejected claim 18 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Number 5,744,921, Makaran, rejected claims 1 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,646,491, Erdman in view of Makaran, rejected claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Makaran as applied to claim 18, and further in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,949,203, Buthker, rejected claims 2 - 5 and 10 - 12 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erdman and Makaran as applied to claims 1 and 9, and further in view of Buthker, rejected claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Erdman in view of Makaran and U.S. Patent Number 6,014,000, Gutierrez, rejected claims 15 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. 104(a) as being unpatentable over Erdman and Gutierrez as applied to claim 14 and further in view of Buthker, and objected to claims 6 - 8 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In accordance with the examiner's indication of allowable subject matter, the applicants have amended claim 1 to include the limitations of claims 2 - 6, and claims 2 - 6 have been canceled. The applicants believe that claims 1, 7, and 8 are allowable over the art of record, either taken separately or in combination. Also, in accordance with the amendments to claim 1, the applicants have amended claims 9, 14, and 18 to include the allowable subject matter. Specifically, claim 9 has been amended to include at least the limitations of claims 10 - 13 and claims 10 - 13 have been canceled. Claim 14 has been amended to include at least the limitations of claims 15 - 17, and claims 15 - 17 have been canceled. Claim 18 has been amended to include at least the limitations of claims 19 and 20 and claims 19 and 20 have been canceled.

Therefore, the applicants believe that claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 14, and 18, as amended herein, are allowable over the art of record.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of

any claim, unless Applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.


Believing to have responded to each and every rejection contained in the Office Action mailed June 7, 2004, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 7, 8, 9, 14, and 18; thereby placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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